

# SMOKE SIGNALS

Volume 44/Number 16 March 2015



## Administration Message

Dear Fellow Residents:

As we move forward in the New Year, most of us have been coping with the weather and longing for springtime. Local municipal elections take place on April 7th with the new VBT to be sworn-in in May. Your Village Board has been working diligently in addressing the challenges facing our town. We have been shouldering-on in the admin office adjusting to changes stemming from the loss of key employee Kathy Leach. We are moving forward with the final phase of the 2014 Road Improvement Program, working toward credit card payment for Village fees and services, and exploring our options for new water meters as part of our review of capital/operational/infrastructure needs. A water rate increase stemming from another decision by Chicago to raise rates for Lake Michigan water has been enacted and we have reached agreement for a new contract with the Police Union. Read on for details and don't miss the IHP Annual Easter Egg hunt on April 4, 2015 at Blackhawk Park. See you there!

### *The Passing Of A Dear Friend*

In case you missed it on our website, we regret to inform our residents that Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant Kathy Leach passed away Wednesday morning December 17, 2014. Kathy began working for the Village in late 1992 and soon became an outstanding employee and good friend who will be greatly missed by all of us. Her expertise and historical memory of Village matters will be hard to replace. Many organizations have a "go to" person for special projects and requests. Kathy was that person for the Village's administrative functions. Our sympathy and condolences go out to Kathy's husband Mike and her family as they grieve for her. We will keep them and Kathy in our thoughts and prayers.

Rest in peace Kathy! We will miss you greatly!

### *Crackfill Program - List Of Streets*

Our Village engineers are in the process of preparing the specifications for the crack-filling contract for the completion of the 2014 Road Improvement Project for the Village. The specs will go out for bid in late February with a return date that will allow the Village Board of Trustees to award the contract at the March 12th VBT meeting. In addition to the crack filling/sealing program which is a part of the "all streets plan" approved by the voters last year, the final inspection of work done to our satisfaction and all punch list items will be completed this year beginning in spring. To remind you, the following streets are designated for the crack-fill program: 70th Place; 72nd Street; Acacia Circle; Acacia Drive; Acacia Lane; Algonquin Drive; Blackhawk Trail; Cherrywood

Court; Cochise Drive; Edgebrook Court; Flagg Creek Drive; Glenbrook Court; Hiawatha Lane; Howard Avenue; Indian Wood Lane; Laurel Avenue; Osceola Trail; Potawatomie Trail; Sauk Trail; Sequoya Lane; Shabbona Lane; Shawnee Trail; Tecumseh Lane; Timber Ridge Court; Wabansee Lane.

### *Municipal Elections*

On April 7, 2015, our residents will have the chance to vote for the candidate of their choice for various offices on the local level. In Indian Head Park five positions are up for election. They are (and candidates) Village President-Tom Hinshaw; Village Trustee-Rita Farrel-Meyer, Glenn Mann, Christian Metz; Village Clerk-Laurie Scheer.

A basic premise upon which our (or any) democratic form of government is based is the consent of the governed. The government obtains that consent by holding elections and we provide that consent by casting our ballots. Please take the time to vote on April 7, 2015.

### *E-Pay Is Coming!*

We have heard the requests from our residents to provide them with the ability to pay bills, obtain licenses, and buy Vehicle and Yard Waste Stickers using a credit card for payment. The Village has been working on this and I am pleased to report to you that this will soon be a reality. As I write this, the plan is to have this program available beginning March 16th. Please see the article about E-Pay elsewhere in this newsletter.

### *Water Rate Increase*

As you may already know, the City of Chicago has again unilaterally increased the water rates charged to the suburbs by 15%. This rate increase went into effect on January 1, 2015. As a result, the Village of Indian Head Park has been forced to raise its water rates by \$.54 per one thousand gallons to \$10 per thousand effective January 1, 2015. One gallon of water from Indian Head Park now costs one penny.

### *Water Meter Replacement*

The meters for accounts on the IHP water system are over 20 years old. Parts for meter repairs are getting hard to find. We are discovering discrepancies between the inside meter readings and the outside meter. The current system costs many man-hours to read meters, record the data, and prepare the bills. The VBT has discussed replacing them at several meetings. Trustee Bailey, Administrator Brooks, and Public Works Superintendent Ed Santen have been researching this

*continued on page 2*

## Message continued from page 1

matter and will be reporting to the VBT in the near future.

### **New Collective Bargaining Agreement**

I am pleased to report that we have been able to reach and ratify agreement with the Metropolitan Alliance of Police IHP Chapter 501 for a new contract covering the Village's five (5) full-time sworn police officers to replace the one expiring April 30th. The Union and the Village (represented by Village Counsel and Chief Brooks) were able to reach an amicable agreement for a 4-year deal granting 2% pay-raises in each year (compared to 2.5%-2.75% recently bargained elsewhere). This successor agreement came as an unexpected but welcome surprise having been concluded in one negotiating session saving the Village the legal costs of lengthy bargaining and the possibility of impasse with the additional costs of \$40k-50k for arbitration. In arbitration, the arbitrator can only award all of one side's proposals or the other's. The majority of the VBT deemed this not a prudent risk to take and believed it to be a good, fair deal over all.

### **Snow Plowing And Salting**

On behalf of all of our residents, and especially those who have taken the time to let us know their appreciation, I want to

commend Supt. Ed Santen and the Public Works Department for the fine work in keeping our streets salted and plowed this winter and especially during the super-snowstorm on February 1st. We are fortunate to have Ed and his team ready and willing to respond to these storms at all hours of the day or night and on weekends. Ed's experience and expertise is an invaluable asset to our Village when it comes to the decision to salt/plow the streets. Our Police Department also plays a valuable role, especially at night, in keeping Chief Brooks and Supt. Santen informed when the streets are getting icy and need attention. Through their collective effort and hard work, our streets are made safe and passable as soon as possible. Thanks Guys!

In closing, I am delighted to report the birth of my second grand-daughter Eleanor Helen "Ellie" in January. As grandparents everywhere know, it is a tremendously wonderful event. I want to thank everyone for the well wishes expressed to me and conveyed to my family.

Hopefully, by the time you read this newsletter, the snow has quit and the temperatures have warmed up and we can look forward again to outdoor activities!

Respectfully, Richard S. Andrews, Mayor

## Display of Street Numbers

Did you know that the IHP Village Municipal Code requires that all owners and occupants of a building located within the corporate boundaries of the Village are required to display the number of their street address on their building or on a sign or post directly in front of the building so that it is visible from the street? Chapter 8.40 of the Village's Municipal Code requires that the address numbers shall be in Arabic numbers at least 4 inches high (or 3 inches high if the building/post is less than 40 feet from the roadway) and be placed in a prominent place visible from all directions of travel on the street in front of the building. The numbers shall be of contrasting color from the building/background on which they are placed. The last

thing any of us would like to have happen is for police, fire, or emergency personnel be delayed in responding to a call for help because they could not find our address. As the weather warms, take some time to go to the street in front of your home and look at your building. Can you see your address? Check it in daylight and after dark. If you cannot see the numbers, take steps to correct that situation. Address numbers on a single mailbox in front of your home are helpful but where multiple mailboxes are involved, it can be confusing. Help the people who want to help you during an emergency. Display visible address numbers on your homes and businesses!

**Smoke Signals**  
(708) 246-3137

**Volume 44, Number 16**  
Circulation 2000

*Smoke Signals* is published by the Village of Indian Head Park to inform its residents of present activities in the village and the ever-growing plans for the future in the pursuit of better government and good citizenship.

Teepee Topics news items should be submitted to the Newsletter Coordinator at the Municipal Offices.

Full page advertisements - \$200.00, 1/2 page advertisements - \$125.00, 3 1/2" x 3 1/2" size advertisements - \$75.00, business card size advertisements - \$45.00, trading post advertisements - \$20.00 (no commercial advertisements - the advertisement will run two times at no cost, then a \$20.00 charge).

Extra copies and back issues (up to one year) of *Smoke Signals* can be obtained at the Village Hall.

[www.indianheadpark-il.gov](http://www.indianheadpark-il.gov)

### **VILLAGE OF INDIAN HEAD PARK**

201 Acacia Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525  
(708) 246-3080  
[www.indianheadpark-il.gov](http://www.indianheadpark-il.gov)

#### **Office Hours**

Mon., Tues., Wed. and Fri 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and  
Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
Closed Saturday, Sunday and Holidays

**Mayor:** Richard S. Andrews

**Trustees:** Brian T. Bailey Norman L. Schnauffer  
Tom Hinshaw Matthew P. Walsh II  
Brenda O'Laughlin Amy Jo Wittenberg

**Village Clerk:** Joseph V. Consolo

**Chief of Police/  
Administrator:**

John Brooks

**Police Dept.** Non-Emergency 246-4534  
**Emergency** 9-1-1

**Fire Dept.** Non-Emergency 352-9229  
**Emergency** 9-1-1

The advertisements and notices of privately sponsored events or activities contained in *Smoke Signals* are provided for informational purposes only, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Village of Indian Head Park, its officials or employees. The inclusion of a product advertisement or notice of a privately sponsored event or activity herein should not be construed as an endorsement by the Village of that product, event or activity.

## Shopping Locally Can Hold Down Property Tax Bills

By Dan Patlack

Commissioner, Cook County Board of Review

Every community has their own collection of small businesses, many of them family owned and operated. We consider them as fixtures in our neighborhoods and it is painful to see them struggle in this tough economy. They face relentless competition from big box stores and on-line shopping. Shoppers are always looking for bargains



and local merchants find it difficult to fight a pricing war. Loyalty to community and friendly service seem to be the most important characteristics of the successful local business, however, you have another important reason to shop locally: supporting your local businesses will keep your property taxes down.

It's easy to understand that sales taxes collected locally will help your local governments, but property tax help is more complicated. Residential property owners and businesses share the property tax burden. The higher the assessed value, the more you pay in property taxes. Commercial property owners have a higher level of assessment than residential and will pay two and a half times as much for the same market value of property. This variation in assessment is a Cook County phenomenon and puts tremendous pressure on our Cook County businesses that are close to a bordering county.

Commercial property is valued according to the income they produce, so when struggling businesses in Cook County close, they reduce the property value and the amount of taxes paid for that property. The assessed value of a commercial property is determined by the rent that is collected by the property owner. When a store front is vacant, the rent revenue stream is diminished. Since the taxing bodies are not lowering their levies, all the property owners that are left pay the lost tax revenue. For example: if a five-store strip mall that has five businesses paying an equal amount of rent loses two businesses, the property owner can lose 40% of his income and be entitled to a 40% reduction in his assessed valuation for that property. Pay attention to those empty storefronts in your community. We are all paying that share of property taxes.

So when your local Chamber of Commerce encourages you to buy locally, remember that driving out of town to save a little money may cost you in your property tax bill. Save your local stores and save yourself some property tax costs.

Shop in Indian Head Park whenever possible!

## E-Pay (Coming Soon!)

The Village, in conjunction with Countryside Bank and the State of Illinois, has been working to facilitate credit card payment for various fees and transactions. You will see a link on various website pages for E-Pay. Payment by credit card can be made for a certain limited number of items on-line and all items (see below) in person at the Village Hall. Our staff has received training and is establishing procedures for this new program. As I write this, the plan is to go "Live" with the E-Pay credit card payment program on March 16, 2015. Please watch our website for further information.



*Items that can be paid online include:*

Water/Sewer  
Business License renewals  
Liquor License renewals  
Building Permit  
Vehicle sticker renewals  
Parking tickets/Ordinance violation tickets

*Items that can be paid in person:*

All of the above (not just renewals) plus  
Alarm Fees  
Contractor Business Licenses  
Resale Inspections  
Smoke Signals Advertising  
Yard Waste Stickers  
(Actually, anything we'd accept cash or check for)

However, the convenience of this program comes with a cost of 2.35% of the transaction cost with a \$1.00 minimum charge. The service fee is a pass through of a cost charged to the Village per transaction. Payment by Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express will be accepted.

Advertisement

### WE ARE YOUR ASHBROOK SPECIALISTS . . .

We've been successfully selling homes in Indian Head Park for years!

**The Lehman Group**



Patricia Lehman, GRI, CRS  
Kathleen Henneberry  
(708) 507-0162



## Identity Theft And Protecting Yourself

There are 4 absolute things you must do to protect yourself from identity theft.

- Set up transaction alerts through your bank and credit cards. Almost all financial institutions will alert you when money is withdrawn or deducted from your credit/banking account via text, e-mail or both. Set the dollar amount "alert" as little as a penny, if possible. If your account is compromised by an identity thief, they may initially only charge a very small amount to if it's viable. Then they may wait weeks or months before hijacking your account. So question even the smallest amount of charges or withdrawals when you know you didn't make those charges.
- Monitor activity on your accounts as often as possible. Many banks use the time that passes between the fraud and its discovery to determine how much money you will get back from them. The shorter that time frame, the more you will be reimbursed. Bank accounts are not like credit cards. Consumers are usually only responsible for \$50.00 of any fraud against a credit card. Conversely, bank accounts that become victim to identity theft might not be reimbursed at all unless it's caught in a timely manner.



- Watch over your credit. Consumers are entitled by law to one free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax and Trans Union) annually. That's a total of three free credit reports per year. To get them, logon to: <https://www.annualcreditreport.com>. This is the ONLY source for free credit reports that is authorized by federal law. Do not Google "Free credit reports" as it will only take you to sites looking to profit from selling you a "free" credit report. Instead of getting all three at the same time, stagger them throughout the year. For example, get one from Experian in January, another from Equifax in June and the third from Trans Union in October.
  - Finally, think about putting a "freeze" on your credit through the credit bureaus. This service only costs you \$10 and stays on your credit until you lift it yourself. This is especially useful if you do not intend to actively use your credit in the foreseeable future like purchasing a house or vehicle.
- Finally, if you suspect you are a victim of identity theft, or have questions, contact the Illinois Attorney General's office at 1-866-999-5630. Or, contact the non-emergency number of the Indian Head Park Police at 708-246-4534.

---

Advertisement



### *Heather and Vine by Cholor*

Invites you to join us, March 9-14, for our First Annual Tulip Festival.

**We will have tulip plants, tulip bouquets and tulip art.**

On Thursday, March 12, local artisan Pat Wisemann will join us from 5-8 pm for "after hours" displaying her beautiful line of nature photography. Note-cards, frame-able prints and posters will be available for purchase. They will feature prominently tulips along with other spring bloomers. Please visit us and bring home a piece of spring! Refreshments will be served. For further details, visit our website at [www.heatherandvine.com](http://www.heatherandvine.com) Look for us on Facebook.

Contact: Janet Shangle

Shop: 708-246-6661

Cell: 708-369-3439

Email: [infor@heatherandvine.com](mailto:infor@heatherandvine.com)

[janetshangle@gmail.com](mailto:janetshangle@gmail.com)



# Easter Egg Hunt

Blackhawk Park on Cascade for Children of All Ages

Saturday,  
April 4, 2015  
at 11:00 a.m.

Hosted by the  
Village of Indian Head Park



***Selling or Buying a Home?***  
*Call me for a FREE No obligation  
 Consultation or Evaluation!*

***Rose Mary Woodley, ABR,CNS***  
*Realtor Broker Associate*  
***Direct 708-977-5298***



**Rachel Thompson**

*Broker*

(773) 203-7522 (cell)

(708) 352-4840 (office)

(781) 810-2210 (fax)

rachel.thompson@cbexchange.com



Residential Brokerage  
 219 W. Hillgrove Avenue  
 LaGrange, IL 60525  
[www.rachelthompsonrealstate.com](http://www.rachelthompsonrealstate.com)



**SHARON KALINOSKI, CPA**

*Income Tax Preparer*

Acacia Homeowner & Resident

Authorized IRS e-file Provider since 1999

Very Reasonable Rates

Evening & Weekend Appts. Available

1-708-805-0675

**Mirabella's**  
 Hair Salon

**15% off**  
 for First-time Customers

**Dawn Miranda**  
 Color & Hair specialist

6950 S. Wolf Road, Suite B, Indian Head Park, IL 60525  
 708-246-7400 / 708-655-3887



**JOHN C. SKREKO, DDS, MAGD**

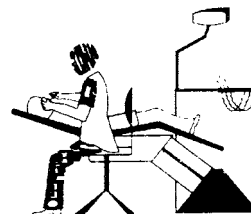
*Master Academy of General Dentistry*

*Fellow Academy of General Dentistry*

*Fellow Academy of Dentistry International*

*Fellow International College of Dentists*

- Serving the community over thirty years.
- Call for an appointment.
- Most procedures performed.
- Comprehensive care for the family including implants.



6961 VINE STREET, SUITE #A  
 INDIAN HEAD PARK, IL 60525  
 708-246-1263

**Postal Customer**  
 Indian Head Park, Illinois  
 60525



Presort Standard  
 U.S. Postage  
 Paid  
 Indian Head Park, IL  
 Permit No. 203